

Biology for Majors - I (BIOL 1306-002)

Sul Ross State University International (INTL) Eagle Pass

Fall 2025 Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 - 10:45AM Location: Eagle Pass Campus 0A117

In-Person Instruction Only — No Online/Remote Option

Instructor: Dr. Ferhat Ozturk

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Phone: 830-703-4832

Office: Eagle Pass Campus, Building D

Student Hours: Wednesdays 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Class Meets: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30–10:45 AM, Room 0A117 (in-person only)



Required: OpenStax Biology 2e — read free online, download a PDF, or purchase a low-cost print copy at [OpenStax](https://openstax.org)

Required - TopHat: used for both your pre-class Adaptive Learning assignments and in-class assessments (see Activities & Grading below). TopHat registration instructions are posted on Blackboard. Please connect TopHat to Blackboard so grades sync automatically.

Recommended Study Companion: NotebookLM

I have created a shared NotebookLM notebook loaded with our course materials that you may use to organize notes, generate summaries, and quiz yourself while studying: [Open our BIOL 1306 NotebookLM notebook](#). This tool is explicitly authorized for personal study use; it is not a substitute for reading the assigned OpenStax chapters or completing your own TopHat and exam work, and it does not override the Academic Integrity policy below regarding submitted work.

Important Note: *The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes/corrections to the course materials, assignment dates, or other updates will be communicated to the students ahead of time. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard for updates to the syllabus.*



Course Information

This course is the first of a two-semester sequence designed to provide students with a strong foundation in biology. It begins with the molecular and cellular basis of life, including the chemistry of biomolecules, cell structure and function, energy metabolism, photosynthesis, cellular respiration, cell communication, and the principles of genetics, molecular biology, and biotechnology. Students will develop scientific literacy, critical thinking, and laboratory skills essential for success in advanced biology courses.

We will also emphasize **scientific methods**, **data interpretation**, and **research literacy** to prepare students to function as independent, objective scientists in laboratories and field settings. The content of this course directly supports the material in BIOL 1307 (Biology II for Majors).

About Me & My Teaching Philosophy

I am Dr. Ozturk, and I am excited to be part of your academic journey this semester. With over a decade of teaching experience, I joined Sul Ross State University in Fall 2025 as Associate Professor of Biology and Lead Program Coordinator of Biomedical Sciences at the Eagle Pass Campus. My academic background includes a Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Nevada, Reno, followed by postdoctoral research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Before moving to Texas, I served as the department chair and director of the Honey Research Center in Samsun, Turkey.

From Spring 2022 through Summer 2025, I taught **BioSciences I (BIO 1203)** at UTSA for **seven semesters**, where I also served as Program Director of the **HONEY Pathway**, a USDA-funded initiative. Through this program and my **Medicinal Properties of Honey** course, I have mentored hundreds of **student scientists**. Many of these students have gone on to medical school, dental school, graduate programs, careers in industry, and teaching positions.

My research and teaching are deeply rooted in the study of honey and its medicinal properties - particularly its antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties, and the development of honey wound gel - but my broader passion is guiding students to think critically, explore scientifically, and connect biology to real-world challenges. Throughout this course, I will bring in examples from my own lab to show you what working biologists actually do with the concepts we study. I believe education is a collaborative journey where curiosity, critical thinking, and inclusivity play central roles.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Display a basic knowledge of biology from the chemical makeup to how it replicates.
- Identify the basic building blocks of biology.
- Understand the structure and functions of cells and differences among cell types.
- Describe photosynthesis and respiration at the cellular level.
- Demonstrate how structure and function are related in biology.
- Explain the fundamentals of biotechnology and its real-world applications in medicine and research.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Biology

- Demonstrate an understanding of biology as the study of life and its connections with other life sciences, such as chemistry and physics, as well as engineering and other disciplines.
- Describe how cell structure impacts the functions cells can carry out.
- Explain the types of molecules necessary for life and how living cells convert these molecules into energy.
- Demonstrate understanding of the “currency of energy” in the living cell and how this is utilized and converted into other forms of energy.
- Explain the concept of genetics, character traits, and how natural variation has occurred.
- Analyze and understand the concept of molecular and cellular biology.
- Recognize how biotechnology tools translate basic biological knowledge into medical and research applications.

Marketable Skills

- Ability to organize, analyze, and interpret data.
- Proficiency with presentation software.
- Effective time management and meeting deadlines.
- Ability to speak and write clearly about scientific topics.
- Professional email communication skills.
- Familiarity with digital learning and AI-assisted study tools used in modern research and industry settings.

Grade Distribution and Letter Grade

Grade	Percentage
A	90 - 100 %
B	80 - 89.5%
C	70 - 79.5%
D	60 - 69.5%
F	<60

Please NOTE: All GRADES posted on Blackboard are provided as Percentages not Points.

The Contribution % of each type of assessment is listed above and will be used to calculate the Weighted Total for the Midterm and Final Grades

- **There are no extra credits**
- **No late work will be accepted**

Study Guide

You are expected to have read and taken notes on the assigned TopHat Biology reading in your e-book **BEFORE** you come to the lecture. During the lecture, you will be asked to answer a series of “**In-Class Assessments**” based on the relevant subject. Your unit exams, and your final exam, will be **based** on these reading questions. I want to be clear what the word, “based” means. Some questions on your Exams will be the same as the In-Class Questions given in the lecture. However, many questions will be edited versions of these questions, that will require a different answer.

Activities and Grading

Activity	Quantity	Percentage
• Unit Exams (5 – In person)	5	40%
• FINAL Exam Comprehensive, In Person	1	10%
• TopHat Adaptive Learning Assignments (pre-class)	15	25%
• TopHat In-Class Assessments (For Each Unit)	5	15%
• Group Study: Unit Posters (in-class)	4	10%
TOTAL		100%

Unit Exams (40%)

There are 5 (five) Unit Exams, each consisting of 50 multiple-choice questions, taken IN PERSON in our classroom (Room 0A117) on the designated dates in the Course Schedule below. There is no online, remote, or take-home option.

No excuses, no exceptions: No excused absences and no makeup exams are offered for any reason — illness, work, travel, family events, technology problems, etc. If you are not physically present for an exam, you will receive a 0 for that exam.

As your only built-in safety net, **your lowest of the 5 unit exam scores is automatically dropped**; your top 4 scores are averaged to determine 40% of your final grade. Because this drop already exists, **individual exams cannot be excused or made up under any additional circumstance.**

Final Exam (10%)

The comprehensive, end-of-course Final Exam consists of 100 questions covering material from all units and is taken IN PERSON, with no exceptions and no makeup option. Its score never dropped and contributes 10% of your final grade. Failure to take the Final Exam may result in failure of the course.

TopHat Adaptive Learning Assignments (25%)

Adaptive, chapter-based reading and practice assignments are delivered through TopHat. Each assignment must be completed BEFORE the class session in which that chapter is discussed - come to class ready to apply what you've read, not to read it for the first time. Access TopHat through the link on Blackboard. To account for illness, connectivity issues, or other "life happens" situations, **your 2 lowest assignment scores are dropped.**

TopHat In-Class Assessments (15%)

During most lectures I will ask questions through TopHat; you'll answer using your phone, tablet, or laptop. You must be physically present in class to answer; there is no makeup or individual assignment option for missed TopHat questions. For each unit, one TopHat grade will be transferred to Blackboard, which will be calculated from each chapter. **Your 1 lowest in-class TopHat unit score will be dropped.**

Group Study: Unit Posters (10%)

Group Study has been redesigned this semester into an in-class poster activity. Five times during the semester, once per unit, on the exam-review class period before each Unit Exam, you will work with

your assigned group to create a poster, either (a) a visual summary of the unit's core concepts, or (b) a poster exploring a specific topic connected to current biology research (a list of suggested topics, including examples drawn from my own honey and biomaterials research, will be provided). Posters are created and presented in class; there is no take-home or individual option, and you must be physically present to participate. **Your lowest score of the 4 poster is dropped.**

Attendance

Attendance is required this semester. You are expected to attend at least 85% of our scheduled class meetings — no more than 5 absences across the semester (out of 29 regular class sessions). Any absence must be reported to Dr. Ozturk BEFORE the missed class or immediately on the day of the absence, by email or Blackboard message.

Notifying me of absence lets me check in on you, but it does not exempt you from missed work: because there is no makeup for TopHat in-class questions, Group Study Posters, or exams, an absence will still cost you those points beyond the built-in drops described above.

Please Read the Following Section Carefully

Your final course grade is automatically calculated from your total course percentage using the grade table above.

At the end of the course, sometimes I receive emails from students saying things like, “I have an 88.3%. Can't you just round up my grade to an A?” The answer is no. Your final course grade is determined by your percentage grade, not by how close you are to the next letter. I can't “give” students points to reach the next grade, nor can you do extra work to earn extra points. Every point must be earned, and every point is important — be prepared for each exam.

Communication Plan

There are several ways you can communicate with me:

- **Email:** You may email me at **Ferhat.Ozturk@sulross.edu**. Please begin your message with a professional greeting such as *Good morning, Hello, or Dear Dr. Ozturk*. Casual greetings like *hey, yo, or whassup* are not appropriate for academic communication.
 - **Course Messages in Blackboard:** Use this option if you need to send me a private message regarding grades or other sensitive information. This is the only secure way to discuss grades. You must log in to Blackboard to send and receive course messages.
 - **Response Time:** I will respond to all messages within **24–48 business hours**.
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Don't hesitate to reach out and to join me during **Student Support Hours (office hours)**. I will be in my office or available online to answer questions and help you better understand the subject matter.

Course Management and Policies

Instructor-Initiated Drops

This course uses instructor-initiated drops for students who exceed the attendance limit described above. Up to the last day for students to withdraw from an individual course — **Friday, November 6, 2026** — you may be dropped for exceeding 5 absences (more than 15% of scheduled class meetings). Students will receive at least one courtesy warning when approaching this limit, sent via Blackboard to the student's email address. A subsequent absence may result in being dropped from the course; notification of the drop will also be sent via Blackboard. This drop does not affect enrollment in your other courses. Please consult the Dropping Courses webpage for further details on the process and appeals. Please see the [Sul Ross Academic Calendar](#) for official Drop and Withdrawal dates and procedures.

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Essential Student Information

SRSU Disability Services:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. RGC students can also contact Alejandra Valdez, at 830-758-5006 or email alejandra.valdez@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and honesty in all work. Submit only your own work, cite sources properly, and do not reuse assignments from other courses or copy from online materials. Unauthorized collaboration or the use of tools such as AI without permission is prohibited — the one exception is the NotebookLM study notebook described above, which is pre-authorized strictly as a personal study aid and not as a source of answers you submit as your own work.

Violations may result in failing grades on assignments or the course, as well as further university consequences. I take academic dishonesty very seriously — but remember, citations are your friend.

There is a difference between intentional dishonesty and honest mistakes made while learning. If you are unsure, please ask.

Do:

- Cite all sources used in assignments and presentations.
- Ask for clarification if you're not sure what counts as plagiarism.
- Collaborate only when group work is clearly allowed.
- Use your own words and ideas to show what you've learned.

Don't:

- Copy text or ideas from the internet, AI tools, or peers without citation.
- Submit work completed for another course as if it were new.
- Share answers or collaborate on exams or assignments when not permitted.
- Assume "small" plagiarism is acceptable — it is not.

Classroom Climate of Respect

This course is built on free expression, critical inquiry, and open discussion of ideas. Together, we share the responsibility of creating and sustaining an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for one another's viewpoints.

Disagreement and debate are valuable parts of learning, but they must always be conducted with professionalism and courtesy. Intimidation, harassment, or personal attacks of any kind will not be tolerated. Likewise, no one should be belittled or discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or personal identity.

Challenging topics, including politically or socially sensitive issues, may arise in the study of biology and its broader impact. Our classroom will remain a respectful and safe space where all voices can be heard, questions can be asked, and learning can take place.

Commitment to Your Success

I believe education is a collaborative journey where curiosity, critical thinking, and inclusivity are central. My goal is to create a supportive learning environment that values your unique perspectives and experiences. I understand that challenges such as health concerns, financial pressures, or unexpected life events may affect your ability to fully engage in class.

My commitment is to support you not only in mastering the course material but also in developing the skills and confidence needed for lifelong learning and success. If you encounter difficulties inside or outside of class that impact your performance, please reach out to me. Together we can find strategies and resources to help you succeed.

As part of the Sul Ross Familia, I see each student as more than just a grade—I see you as a future scientist, professional, or educator. Many of my former students have gone on to medical school, dental school, graduate programs, industry positions, and teaching careers. I am here to challenge you, encourage you, and provide guidance as you explore your own path in biology.

SRSU Library Services

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer free resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.